



BILLERICAY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1944.



PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT:

Medical Officer of Health

Dr. J. Douglas Wells, O.B.E.(Mil.)

District Medical Officers and Public Vaccinators:

Dr. Arthur Quennell

Dr. R. Bowesman

Dr. J.C. Campbell

Pathologist:

The E.M.S. Laboratory at St. Andrew's Hospital,
Billericay.

Sanitary Inspector: A.L. Ledden, M.S.I.A., Cert. S.I.B.
Second Sanitary Inspector: H.J. Sleigh.

Surveyor: H.B. Mayhew, F.I.A.S.

Deputy Surveyor: H.J.M. Baker, M.Inst.M. & Cy. E.

Building Inspectors: T.G. Gozzett,
T.D. Herrett.

Manager of Sewage Disposal Works: D.M. Betts, M.Inst. S.P.
Highways & General Engineering Assistant: E.F. Randerson.

To the Chairman and Members of the Billerica Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Miss Blanks and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present for your consideration my Annual Report upon the Health and Sanitary circumstances of the Billerica Urban District for the year ending 31st December, 1944.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

OF THE AREA.

Area: 29,217 acres.
Population: 37,110 (.R.G.)
Number of Inhabited Houses at the
end of 1944 according to the Rate Books: 12,050.
Rateable Value: £201,471.
Sum represented by a penny rate: £788.

POPULATION.

For the year 1944, the population of this district is given by the Registrar General as 37,110. This represents an increase of 460 over the figure of 1943 which was given as 36,650, but in neither case are the members of the Armed Forces included.

The vital statistics have been worked out on the figures given by the R.G.; the death rate shews a rise of 0.7. and the birth rate an increase of 2.5.

VITAL STATISTICS.

<u>Live Births.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	327	319	646
Illegitimate	18	18	36

Total Birth Rate, Legitimate and Illegitimate 18.6.

Still Births.

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and still births 27.1.

<u>Deaths.</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
	293	242	535

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population 14.4.

Puerperal Sepsis: 3.

Other Puerperal causes: Nil.

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age.

1. All infants per 1,000 live births 29.3
2. Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births 30.9

3. Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate
live births NIL.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) 94 Rate 2.5.

Deaths from Measles NIL

Deaths from Whooping Cough 1

Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years) 2

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS RECORDED IN AGE GROUPS.

Age in Years:	Under 1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	65 onwards.
Diphtheria		1						1	2		1	
Scarlet Fever	1	1	1	2	4	21	6	2	8	4		
Chickengox	1	2	2		3	31	5	1	1		1	
Trvsipelas									1	2	1	1
Pneumonia	1	5	4	1	1	4	4	1	2	3	3	4
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis						1						
Querp. Pyrexia									1			
Whooping Cough	26	23	30	25	20	74	7	6	5	2		
Measles			1		2	8	7	9	2	1	2	1
German Measles	2	3	6	5	9	64	44	34	14	5		
Infect. Jaundice			1		1	7	5	6	4	4	2	1
Scarlatina											1	
Dysentery									1			
	31	35	45	33	40	210	78	60	41	21	11	7

INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFICATIONS- EXCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS.

	W. Cough.	Diphtheria	S. Fever.	Chickenpox	Erysipelas	Pneumonia	German Measles	Measles	Spinal-Cerebro Meningitis	Puer. Pyrexia	Opthalmia Neonatorium	Infect. Jaundice.	Scarlatina	Dysentery
Billericay	16	2	8	1		6	8	12				2		
Laindon	134		22	1	3	8	131	5		1		5		1
Wickford	13		14	24		5	27	3	1			1		
Pitsea	31		2	13	2	5	8	9				12	1	
Great Burstead			1			1								
Basildon	3	1		4		2	5	1				2		
Crays Hill		1	2											
Newham				1			1	1						
Little Burstead	1											1		
Bowers Gifford		1										2		
Vange	9			3		1	2	2				4		
N. Benfleet	5											2		
Ramsden Wellhouse			1			1	4							
Dunton	6													
	218	5	50	47	5	33	186	33	1	1		31	1	1

TUBERCULOSIS - NEW CASES, 1944.

<u>Age Periods.</u>	<u>Pulmonary.</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary.</u>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1	1	-	-	-
1 - 5	2	1	2	1
5 - 15	1	1	5	6
15 - 25	9	11	1	2
25 - 35	8	7	2	3
35 - 45	5	2	1	-
45 - 55	4	3	1	-
55 - 65	4	1	-	-
65 onwards	4	2	-	-
	38	28	12	12

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES DURING 1944.

AGE	D E A T H S			No of deaths which apply to district.
	No. in district	Outward Transfers	Inward Transfers	
Under 1 yr.	15	11	5	20
1 & under 2	2	-	2	4
2 " " 5	1	1	-	1
5 " " 15	3	1	2	5
15 " " 25	6	3	3	9
25 " " 35	11	2	2	13
35 " " 45	19	7	9	28
45 " " 55	31	14	6	37
55 " " 65	69	36	17	86
65 " " 75	140	80	11	151
75 & upwards	186	96	11	197
	483	251	68	551

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

Efforts have still been made to bring home to parents the facilities available for having their children immunised against diphtheria and as a result

345 children under 5 years of age and
88 children between the ages of 5 and 15

TOTAL 433

completed immunisation.

MILK PRODUCTION.

Under not easy circumstances, the farmers have produced more milk than ever before and yet there has been less milk available to the general public. This is no doubt due to the fact that the nation has more fresh milk consumers. Many families who pre-war used tinned milk, now have to surrender points for this and consequently are using their allocation of fresh milk. This, in itself, is a very good thing. Children, of course, are still being given milk in schools and some invalids receive priority. Thus although the milk supply has increased, it is still not yet large enough to meet the needs of all. In particular, elderly people and young workers most feel this lack.

AIR RAID DAMAGE DURING 1944.

The year 1944 was one of the most eventful of the whole war. Preparation for the invasion of the Continent was going on all over the country and on the 6th June - "D" Day - that invasion was begun. For a short period there was a lull in enemy activity over this country and then the Germans launched one of their secret weapons against us. This was the V.I. or Flying Bomb and a very formidable weapon it proved to be until the coastal defences and the barrage balloon and fighter defences were reorganised and reinforced. The widespread blast damage made by these missiles caused much damage to property and many casualties from broken glass, etc.

In October, 1944, this Area received one of Hitler's second secret weapons, the V.II or Long Range Rocket. This was a revolutionary type of warfare, inasmuch as there was no possibility of warning the public of the approach of these missiles because of the great speed at which they travelled. Activity from these two types of bombs increased as the year went on and in all

17 flying bombs and
17 rockets fell in the Area.

Other figures were as follows :-

H.E. Bombs	45 exploded	25 unexploded
Incendiary Bombs	10,750 "	2,015 "
A.A. Shells	13 "	51 "
Phosphorus Bombs	1 "	31 "
A.P. Bombs		1 "

The V.Is and VIIs. greatly increased the number of casualties sustained in the area which were :-

Killed	9
Seriously injured	63
Slightly injured	238

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES
FOR THE AREA.

A. Laboratory Facilities.

These are still provided for at the Emergency Medical Services Laboratory, situated in the grounds of St. Andrew's Hospital.

B. Ambulance Facilities.

An ambulance is available at St. Andrew's Hospital to take civilian cases to the hospital.

An ambulance is stationed at the Isolation Hospital to collect infectious disease cases from the Joint Hospital Board Area and take them to the Isolation Hospital.

C. Nursing in the Home.

I would refer to the paragraph in my Annual Report for 1943. The position is still unchanged and warrants urgent consideration.

D. Treatment Centres, Welfare and School Clinics.

These are under the control of the County Council.

E. Hospitals.

St. Andrew's Hospital, owned by the County Council, and the Emergency Services Hospital attached to it, have been in active use through the year.

The Infectious Disease Hospital at Gooseberry Green has also been fully employed throughout the year, taking cases from this Authority's area and also from a number of the districts of South East Essex. Shortage of domestic and nursing staff has again been one of the major difficulties in the hospital life this year.

THE PREVALENCE OF AND THE CONTROL OF
INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

During 1944, the health of the district has been good and there is nothing special to report.

The Notification of Diphtheria shewed a still further decline. Total notifications for the year numbered 5.

Scabies.

Here again it is possible to state that there was a further decrease in the number of cases.

Housing.

Housing still remains one of the major problems and no doubt will continue to be so for several years to come.

Overcrowding persists all over the district, but the Local Authority is giving much consideration to this matter as the very urgent need to provide more houses is fully appreciated.

Elderly couples present a difficulty which needs special consideration and provision. It has been suggested that some blocks of two-storied self-contained flats should be built, not more than six flats in a block and each flat comprising one good bedroom, one sitting room and a kitchen. These could still be artistic to look at, whilst being advantageous to some of the old people who are getting beyond keeping a garden and who do not really wish for one.

This method would economise in space and would enable the rental to be less for these old age pensioners than it would be for a whole house of their own.

Some interesting facts about Women's needs in future housing were contained in a manifesto published by the National Baby Welfare Council from evidence collected from 2,000 young women, who were serving in the Forces or factories. 52% preferred houses 33% bungalows and 14% flats.

They attached much importance to cleanliness, health centres, maternity and child welfare clinics, space inside and outside their homes, bigger rooms and windows, open spaces in which to obtain healthy exercise and relaxation and gardens.

They were anxious to have homes of their own and to become good wives and mothers. They would be reluctant to send their children to nurseries.

Older women too preferred houses, 70.6% voting in favour of these as against 21.2% for bungalows and 5.7% for flats.

Single women and widows deplored lack of special accommodation for themselves and the majority wanted small homes of their own.

Some of the outstanding general needs voiced by women are :-

All houses should be architect designed and built with an adequate standard of material.

Rooms should be bigger, square and high, whilst walls should be thicker or soundproof.

Hot water, electricity, main water and drainage, bath-room, fixed hand-wash basin, separate indoor W.Cs., adequate laundry facilities and airing cupboard should be included.

Kitchens, sculleries and larders should be more scientifically designed and fitted with cupboards, etc.

The hall should be spacious and light with downstairs rooms opening off it. Stairs should be safe, broad and not winding and bedrooms should open off the landing. Windows should be large and easily cleaned. Doors should be well fitting and skirtings plain or moulded, made of washable material. Floors should be parquet, plain polished wood or of durable composition.

Dangerous stairs and dark corners should be eliminated.

All pipes and tanks should be so installed as to be protected against frost.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA - 1944.

Dwelling houses with respect to defects :-

under Public Health Acts	256
under Housing Acts	694
Premises with respect to vermin	112
Factories	39
Slaughterhouses, Meat and other Food shops and stalls	483
Cowsheds and Dairies	171
Watercourses, Ditches and other nuisance inspections	8
Houses visited with respect to water supply & shortage	139
Dwellings with respect to infectious disease	109
Shops (shops inspected)	3
Essex County Council Act, 1933 (Tents, vans, sheds)	1
Visits with respect to Emergency Mortuary Service	15
Visits with respect to Requisitioned Property	3
Visits with respect to Social Welfare Huts	14
Visits under M.O.H. Circular 2845 (rehousing etc.)	221
	2,268

WATER SUPPLY.

During the year no appreciable extensions were made to water mains but as the result of the drought and an increased supply of lead piping 93 premises which previously relied on rain water supplies were connected to main supplies.

A water shortage in the area was again experienced and 986 applications were received for the Council to deliver water and to meet the requests 506,050 gallons of water were delivered. Considerable assistance was given by the N.F.S. and without that assistance it would have been impossible to meet all demands, my best thanks ^{are} extended to the officials and men of the N.F.S. for the services so ungrudgingly given.

The 37 standpipes in the district supplied a good proportion of the needs of persons living within a reasonable distance. There is still an urgent need for the extension of water mains but as hostilities are drawing to a close it is hoped that the Council will soon be able to proceed with a scheme of main extensions.

During the year 8 samples of water were taken for chemical and bacterial analysis and all the results with the exception of one showed the water to be unfit for drinking or domestic purposes. In 3 of the cases the premises were on the line of water main and as a result of notices served 2 were connected to the water main and in the other case instructions had been given to connect but the work had not been completed at the end of the year. Notices were served in 6 cases to improve the water supply and in one case the owner of the property appealed to the Ministry of Health against the notice but the Ministry rejected the appeal.

SHOPS ACTS.

Three visits were made during the year on complaints having been received as to infringements of the Sunday Trading Restrictions Acts in each case the occupiers were warned against the sale of certain goods on Sundays the warnings had the desired effect of making the delinquents comply with the requirements of the Act. It has not been possible to carry out systematic inspection of shops owing to pressure of work in other spheres.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action to abate smoke nuisances was found to be necessary during the year.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

Only one swimming pool has been in use during the year. The water is supplied from lake in Lake Meadows, the Council's recreation ground. No samples of water have been taken from the pool but no complaints have been received as to the purity of the water.

ERADICATION OF BED BUG.

The problem of infestation by bed bugs is not great in this area due chiefly to the fact that there are very few terraces of houses the large majority being detached which of course confines the infestation to single premises.

It is the responsibility of occupants to rid their premises of vermin but often through ignorance and lack of equipment it has not been possible for them to carry out thorough disinfection. To overcome these difficulties the Council's Officials have given advice, supplied vermicide and loaned sprays gratis. Lethane is still in use as a vermicide but it will be interesting to see the results of the use of D.D.T. when the product is released for general use.

In a few instances where war damage repairs were being carried out vermin were found in the walls and in such instances the premises were treated before repairs were completed. Bed bugs have also been found in furniture taken from damaged buildings precautions were taken to prevent the infestation of requisitioned premises by treating the furniture before being removed to the premises.

VERMIN INCLUDING SCABIES.

A few cases of flea infested premises were reported during the year, suitable action was taken to rid the premises of the vermin.

During the year there was an increase in the number of cases of Scabies reported. Treatment of this complaint was carried out at the First Aid Posts most of the work was, however, carried out at the First Aid Post, Pitsea by members of the Civil Defence First Aid Parties.

During the year approximately 1,200 cases were treated which involved 3,600 baths. Close contact between the personnel of the First Aid Posts and the staff of the Public Health Department ensured that upon completion of the treatment the bedding was disinfected by steam to prevent re-infection.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION.

Many complaints as to rat infestation of a minor character has been brought to the notice of the Public Health Department. In each case the premises were visited and advice given as to the best methods of destruction. The technique as used by the Ministry of Food Pest Officers is applied and the results obtained were satisfactory. The Council once again made a contract with the Essex War Agricultural Committee for the destruction of rats at the Council's Sewage Disposal Works and refuse dumps. During the year 2 operatives from the Surveyor's Department attended refresher courses held by the Ministry of Food in rat destruction and the knowledge gained has been invaluable.

HOUSING.

During the year 694 premises were inspected for housing defects and notices were served where necessary as a result of such action 60 premises were made fit. Quite a number of the 694 premises were inspected as the result of applications for permits for materials. In several cases where complaints as to condition of premises had been received it was noticed upon inspection that the defects were due to enemy action consequently they were passed to the Council's War Damage Department for attention.

During the year great difficulty was experienced in getting ordinary house repairs done this was due to shortage of labour and in June the fly bomb attack on this Country was responsible for quite a lot of damage to property in this area consequently all available labour was commandeered for repairs. Again it has not been possible to have a systematic inspection of houses in the area owing to war time duties connected with Civil Defence. There are a number of houses in the area fit for demolition but owing to shortage of accommodation and the Statutory rules and orders of the Ministry of Health no Demolition Orders can be made.

During the year notification was received from the Ministry of Health that 200 temporary bungalows were to be allocated to the district and by the end of the year negotiations were in progress for the requisition of the land for the sites. The Council's officials inspected the various types of temporary houses and came to the conclusion that the "Arcon" type was best for this area but apparently the demand for this type exceeded the supply so this Authority will have to be content with the type supplied by the Government.

OVERCROWDING.

This problem is still very acute in the area and fly bomb attacks on London have aggravated the position through evacuees coming into this area. The problem is bound to be with us for some time until the evacuees return home or until sufficient houses are built.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936, NUISANCES.

During the year 256 visits were made to premises with respect to nuisances. In most of the cases the nuisances were caused through lack of proper drainage facilities but in some cases to structural defects in premises. Evacuees who are not conversant with country sanitation often are the culprits for causing nuisances but often, a little sound advice has had the result of abating the nuisances. Station Lane, Pitsea has again been the cause of trouble and the Council's application to the Ministry to lay sewers at an approximate cost of £1,500 met with no favourable response. Many complaints were received from householders that house refuse was not regularly collected. Collections were carried out by private contract and it has been difficult to keep the Contractor up to scratch. Continued pressure by the Surveyor on the Contractor has considerably helped. It is hoped that the Council will soon be in a position to administer their own refuse collection by direct labour and it is hoped that the collection of trade refuse will be included in the scheme.

Considerable difficulty has been experienced by traders particularly butchers in disposing of their trade refuse as they have had to make their own arrangements. The salvage collection scheme has helped to clean up the district of dumps of refuse (tins, etc.) made in unofficial places.

In cases where nuisances existed informal notices were served and this had the result generally of abating the nuisances.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD. MILK AND DAIRIES.

During the year 171 visits were paid to cowsheds and dairies this being a decrease on the previous year.

The decrease in visits to cowsheds and dairies as in other spheres of Sanitary Inspection was partly due to the termination of his appointment by the Second Sanitary Inspector who secured an appointment with the Chipping Sodbury Rural District Council this meant that the Senior Sanitary Inspector was without assistance for a period of nearly 3 months. The number of retailers and producers registered with the Council at the end of 1944 was as follows :-

Producers	105.
Retail Purveyors	34.

During the year improvements were carried out to 4 farms to bring them up to standard for the production of designated milks. Informal notices were served in 8 cases and in 5 cases were complied with leaving 3 outstanding at the end of the year. Although there have been no serious infringements of the requirements of the Milk and Dairies Order some cow-keepers are inclined to forget the minor requirements of the Order this is due chiefly I think to the extra duties imposed on them by the War Agricultural Committees by the increased production of milk, ploughing up of extra land, etc.

During the year 2 farms in addition to those already holding licences were granted licences by the Essex County Council to produce designated milks. Licences expiring at 31st December, 1944 to use Special Designation in relation to milk were issued as follows :-

Sale of T.T. from premises.	7
Supplementary licences to sell T.T.	3
Pasteurised milk from vans	2
Pasteurised milk from Premises	7
Licences to bottle Accredited Milk	1
Licences to bottle T.T. milk	2
Total	22

MEAT AND FOODS.

During the year 483 visits were paid to meat and food shops this is a decrease on the previous year. No proceedings were necessary for offences against the Food and Drugs Act.

Quite a few visits have been made to Ministry of Food's Emergency Depots and the food examined. The closest contact is still maintained between this Authority and the Ministry of Food. During the fly bomb attacks quite a number of food shops were damaged and at the request of the Food Executive Officer the stocks of food were examined for condition and certified as fit or otherwise for human consumption.

During the year the following foods were condemned as being unfit for human consumption :-

Canned Milk	97 tins.
Canned fish	196 "
Canned meat	36 "
Canned soup	57 "
Canned vegetables	25 "
Canned fruit	7 "
Milk	36 pints.

	cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	ozs.
Meat	7	-	2	10
Fish	13	1	4	-
Bacon	-	2	20	10
Cereals	6	2	1	-
Bread	1	3	16	-
Cakes	-	1	11	-
Vegetables	16	1	24	14
Fruit	-	-	27	-
Dried fruit	-	3	8	-
Butter and fats	-	-	18	2
Cheese	-	1	4	15
Jam	-	3	21	-
Sugar	-	1	25	8
Sweets	-	-	23	4
Miscellaneous Groceries	-	1	10	-

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

During the year 8 houses were completed. Despite labour difficulties and shortage of materials some owners were able to connect their premises to the sewer and during the year 17 existing dwelling houses and one camp were provided with main drainage.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

During the year 39 visits were paid to Factories in the area. It was necessary to serve notices in 7 cases, of these 5 were in respect of sanitary conveniences one for dirty premises and one for overcrowding. In 3 cases factories were set up in areas not zoned for industrial purposes under Town Planning and the Council took steps for the closure of the factories. Cordial relationship exists between the Public Health Department and H.M. Inspector of Factories and frequent visits are paid by the District Factory Inspector to the Public Health Office for discussions on the conduct of the Factories in the area.

REHOUSING.

Many applications were received by the Council during the year for houses by persons who had been rendered homeless or who were inadequately housed. By arrangement with the Social Welfare Officer applicants living within the district were visited and a record made of the conditions under which the applicants were living. The reports of the Sanitary Inspector were taken into consideration when the Selection Committee allocated the houses. The visits made during the year to applicants numbered 221.

Once again I tender my grateful thanks to the members of this Council for their help and much thanks to my fellow officers on this Council's staff whose friendly, loyal and helpful co-operation is much appreciated by me.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

J. DOUGLAS WELLS.